

Remarks/Arguments:

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephone interview of November 1, 2004. The Attorney for the Applicant and the Examiner discussed the claims and the cited prior art. We discussed the limitations of claim 8 in view of the cited prior art. The present independent claims, as amended, include limitations from claim 8 to distinguish the claims from the cited prior art.

Currently claims 1-7, 9-14, 16-22, 24-28 and 30 are in the present application. Claims 8, 15, 12 and 29 have been cancelled. Claims 3, 11, and 19 have been restored. Claim 30 added.

The above Amendments and these Remarks are in reply to the Office Action mailed July 6, 2004. No fee is due for the addition of any new claims.

Claims 1, 2, 4-10, 12-18, and 20-29 were pending in the Application prior to the outstanding Office Action. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4-10, 12-18, and 20-29.

Claims 1-2, 4-10, 12-18 and 20-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,101,506 to Ukai et al., in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,238,106 to Rosati.

The independent claims 1, 9, 17, and 25 have been amended to include the limitations of old claims 8 and to remove the discussion of the automatic selection of the first selected object as the representative. The independent claims 1, 9, 17 and 25 now state that "objects of the group are treated as a single object such that when a search is performed on the plurality objects the representative will be returned if any of the objects of the group meet a search parameter". Figure 9A of the present invention's specification shows an example of one embodiment of this algorithm.

This newly added limitation is not shown, suggested or given a motivation for in any of the cited prior art alone or in combination. For example, Ukai in column 20, line 39 to line 57 and figure 21, illustrates a mode where only the representative files are searched to reduce the search time. Alternately, in Ukai a search can be done for all of the files in which case, any file will be returned if the file meets a search parameter. Both search modes of Ukai are much different from the system of the claimed invention in which the representative is returned if any of the objects of the group meet a search parameter.

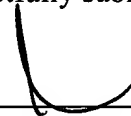
For this reason, the newly modified independent claims 1, 9, 17, and 25 are believed to be allowable over the cited prior art. Claims 2-7, 10-14, 16, 18-22, 24, 26-28 and 30 are dependent upon these independent claims and for that reason, and because of the additional limitations of these claims these claims are believed to be allowable.

In light of the above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now pending in the subject patent application should be allowable, and a Notice of Allowance is requested. The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if he can assist in any way in expediting issuance of a patent.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 24-0037 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

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